

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 23, 2004. Claims 1-11, 16-21, 26-31 and 36 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 16, 26, and 36 are in independent form. Claims 12-15, 22-25, 32-35 and 37 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 10, 16-20, 26-30 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,434,643 (Ejiri), and Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from that patent..

Submitted herewith is a sworn translation of Applicant's Japanese Patent Application 11-085855, filed March 29, 1999. Since that filing date is earlier than the April 14, 1999, U.S. filing date of *Ejiri*, that patent is not available as prior art against the present application. Accordingly, the prior-art rejections have been obviated, and the claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Since Claim 1 is plainly generic to those Species read on by any of Claims 2, 4 and 11 (as well as the Species of Claims 1, 3 and 5-10), Claim 16 reads on the Species of Claim 21, and Claim 26 reads on the Species of Claim 31, Applicant is entitled to rejoinder and allowance of non-elected Claims 2, 4, 11, 21 and 31.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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